

# Oklahoma Conservation Partnership Report

June 2014

**VISION: Productive Lands Healthy Environment -- MISSION: Helping People Help the Land**

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## Feds Feed Families

This summer, USDA will once again lead the Feds Feed Families campaign with the support of the Chief Human Capital Officers Council and other agency partners, which officially began on June 1 and will run through August 27, 2014. The USDA club at the State Office in Stillwater kicked off the event with a Pulled Pork luncheon and collected \$200 for **Cowboys with Compassion**, the nonprofit organization we will be collecting for this year.

<http://www.cowboyswithcompassion.org/>

Since the campaign began in 2009, Federal workers have donated and collected 24.1 million pounds of food and other non-perishable items to support families across America. More than 85 percent of Federal workers live and work outside the Washington D.C. area, so we are helping communities in every state.

Last year USDA collected nearly 9 million pounds of food, and asked agencies this year to set their own goals again and beat their previous best!

All Federal agencies, including field components, are asked to participate in the campaign. The field agencies can share their collections with their local food banks; we are looking forward to ensuring the FFF campaign will stretch across Oklahoma. Please bring non-perishable food items and place them into a designated collection box located in your Federal workplace.

Learn more about most wanted items in area food banks from the [Capital Area Food Bank](#).

**Cowboys with Compassion** will take any kind of food.

Food donations may be canned and/or boxed.

We have placed collection boxes near each entrance door and will be making deliveries periodically throughout the food drive.

The drive ends August 27, 2014.

*"Because We Care"*

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## ENGINEERING REVIEW

### Final Inspection on Ft. Cobb Laterals Site 10 Rehab

The final inspection for Fort Cobb Laterals Site 10 Rehabilitation was conducted on June 5, 2014. Site 10 was originally constructed in 1976 as a low hazard structure but has been reclassified as high hazard. The modifications in this rehabilitation extend the life of the site and bring it into compliance with current high hazard safety criteria.

Site 10 is located 5 miles west of Anadarko, just south of State Highway 62. The sponsors for the project are the South Caddo Conservation District and the Caddo County Commissioners. The dam is 42.4 feet high and composed of 117,700 cubic yards of earthfill.

The rehabilitation of this project consisted of raising the dam 3.8 feet, increasing the auxiliary spillway width from 50 feet to 170 feet, and replacing the 18 inch principal spillway with a new 30 inch concrete pipe. The new principal spillway pipe was installed through the dam via a boring and jacking operation. An auger boring machine was used to tunnel through the embankment and install a 42 inch steel casing pipe. The 30 inch concrete pipe was then slid through this casing pipe and the voided area was filled with grout.

Heath Sand with the Oklahoma Design Section designed this project. Joe Freeland and Ron Smith with the Pauls Valley Watershed Office were the NRCS representatives during construction and Tammy Sawatzky with the Oklahoma Conservation Commission was the Contracting Officer. The contractor was T. McDonald Construction out of Eufaula, Oklahoma.



### Gregg S Hudson to serve as Geologist in the NDCSMC center in Ft. Worth

Gregg S Hudson, currently serving as the Geologist in the NRCS Oklahoma State Office, has been selected, and has accepted, to serve as a Geologist in the National Design, Construction, and Soil Mechanics Center (NDCSMC) in Fort Worth, Texas; he reports July 14, 2014. Gregg has served Oklahoma since arriving in August of 2009. He began his career with the NRCS in July 2007 as the Geologist in the Utah State Office. This new position will still allow him to support Oklahoma in their efforts to put conservation on the ground. And, he looks forward to working with his successor as soon as he or she comes aboard.





## OUTREACH REVIEW

The Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) and Rural Development (RD) partnered to hold a tribal consultation meeting with the Osage Nation. The consultation meeting was held at the Osage Nation tribal complex in Pawhuska, Oklahoma. Representing the Osage Nation were Governor Scott Bighorn and seven tribal leaders and directors. Representing NRCS were; State Conservationist, Gary O Neill, State Tribal Liaison, Carol Crouch and State Director, Ryan McMullen, represented RD. USDA representatives provided attendees with valuable information on the 2014 Farm Bill programs and community based funding opportunities. The focus of the meeting was to consult with the Tribe to identify their conservation needs, issues, barriers or concerns; then determine if the USDA agencies could provide assistance. Informational packets were provided from the Farm Service Agency, NRCS and RD.



**Governor Scott Bighorn, NRCS State Conservationist, Gary O Neill and Tribal leaders of the Osage Nation**

The Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), the Oklahoma Tribal Conservation Advisory Council (OTCAC), the Chickasaw Nation and the Murray County Conservation District partnered to hold free conservation workshop and traditional luncheon on May 7, 2014. The workshop was held at the Chickasaw Cultural Center, in Sulphur, Oklahoma. Farmers, ranchers, Tribes, tribal members and women in agriculture attended. The workshop included a tour of the Chickasaw Cultural Center and a traditional lunch. Attendees were provided valuable information regarding the importance of soil health, best management practices for pasture and rangeland and funding opportunities through USDA 2014 Farm Bill programs. Representatives from the USDA NRCS, Farm Service Agency (FSA), Rural Development (RD), Risk Management Agency (RMA) and the Animal Plant Health and Inspection Service (APHIS) presented updates on the 2014 Farm Bill. According to NRCS Tribal Liaison, Carol Crouch, "This was a unique conservation workshop because attendees not only received valuable information regarding the Farm Bill and importance of soil; but were able to absorb the rich culture of the Chickasaw Nation."



Attendees join in traditional Chickasaw dance



Chickasaw Nation stomp dance



Importance of soil health demonstration



Attendees enjoy traditional Chickasaw meal

## ZONE 1 REVIEW

### Beaver County - Beaver Field Service Center

On June 17, 2014 the Oklahoma Department of Agriculture Food and Forestry, OSU Extension Service and Natural Resources Conservation Service Beaver Field Office hosted teachers from across the state participating in the Ag in the Classroom Tour. Dr. Pauline Hodges spoke first about her experiences growing up in Beaver County during the Dust Bowl and as a teacher. Carri Reddick, District Conservationist for the NRCS then gave a presentation on Salt Cedar in the Beaver River/North Canadian River and demonstrations were set up along the river north of town where the teachers were able to see the approximate area of the root system of Salt Cedars along with bags tied around small portions of the branches to show the amount of water loss through transpiration of Salt Cedars. Finally, Barrett Robertson, Soil Conservation Tech, gave a presentation on the Salt Cedar Beetle that has found its way into Beaver County. He spoke about the life cycle of the Beetle and its possible use as a means of biological control for Salt Cedar. All in all, it was a great day to educate these men and women on some of the issues facing the agriculture industry today and how these issues also affect them, especially in terms of the drought and water shortages. There were approximately 50 teachers that attended this event.



Ag in the Classroom Tour - Beaver County

### Canadian County - El Reno Field Service Center

Every year, Oklahoma Association of Conservation Districts and the National Land and Range Judging Contest steering committee selects an honoree. Honorees are individuals who have made outstanding contributions to the National Land and Range Judging Contest. This year's selection was NRCS Soil Technician, Nick Owen, from the El Reno Field Office. Shown here with his family as they enjoyed the banquet at the Cowboy Hall of Fame where he was honored with his plaque.

Nick was honored for his important part in the site selection and layout of the National Land and Range Judging Contest. Annually he has been instrumental in contest site selection, digging pits, parking vehicles and locating the site to feed over 1000 students, sponsors, and parents in attendance, as well as making sure the judging site & lunch location was returned back to the way it was found. Oklahoma Association of Conservation Districts and the Steering Committee wanted to recognize him for all his great work that he contributes to the contest.



Pictured L-R: (Kale Owen, Kole Owen, Regan Owen, Christi Owen & Nick Owen in the back)



## ZONE 1 REVIEW cont...

### Canadian County - El Reno Field Service Center

On Saturday, April 12<sup>th</sup> Chris Best, NRCS, District Conservationist, Erica Armstrong, District Manager and Becky Inmon, District Secretary, and the Oklahoma County Conservation District, met at Lake Overhouser for the Great American Cleanup, Keep Oklahoma Beautiful Event. We began at 8 a.m. cleaning trash out of the East Stinchcomb Wildlife Refuge. Duck Hunters like to hunt at this location so there were quite a few old rotted duck blinds and old furniture out on the edges of the lake. Becky, Erica and a few helpers picked up trash and debris, Chris and another gentleman picked up the heavy items. Two truck beds and a flatbed trailer were filled full of rotted wood and old furniture. Tiring day but extremely rewarding.



Becky Inmon picking  
up trash

Chris Best cleaning up  
old duck blinds



April 23<sup>rd</sup>, Erica Armstrong, District Manager, Christopher Best, D.C., El Reno F.O., Larry Hood, Soil Conservationist, Severo Cosyleon, Civil Engineer SO, Janet Stewart, OCC's Attorney and Tom Lains with the Oklahoma Corporation Commission all met with Lon Loveless, Project Manager, Dawson Geophysical Company Seismic Group.

They began with a power point demonstration of how their seismic system works and how it affects our watershed dams. Their goal was to be able to do their testing at a distance of 300 Ft from a High Hazard dam instead of the current 1,000 ft. proving that 300 feet had no effect on the dam itself. Dawson wanted to show us how it was hurting their data by being that far away and explained that Seismic monitoring is like an ultra sound that measures off of vibration which puts sound waves into the ground without damaging the soil or doing any ground damage.

We then had a field demonstration with us standing at 100 ft, 200 ft and 300 ft away from the test area. A picture of the equipment used in the test is below.

There were 11 in attendance with two from the NRCS State Office and one from the Commissioners Office.



## ZONE 1 REVIEW cont...

## Grant County - Medford Field Service Center

Grant County was approved for a Local Emphasis Area in 2012, named Grant County Streambank for the installation of Grade Stabilization Structures. These are some recent before/after pictures of the great work our engineers and technicians accomplish. These photos were taken in southwest Grant County near Nash.



## Major County - Fairview Field Service Center

The Major County Conservation District as well as the Fairview USDA Service Center partnered with OSU Extension to hold two 2014 Farm Bill Update informational meetings in Major County on 4/23/2014. The first meeting was held at the Ringwood Community Building at 10:00 am in Ringwood, OK and the second meeting was held at the NW Technology Center in Fairview, OK at 2:00 pm. There were 17 participants at the Ringwood location and 39 participants at the Fairview location. Presentations were given by Dr. Jody Campiche, Assistant Professor Agriculture Policy at Oklahoma State University, Keith Whiteneck, FSA CED and Michael Roberts, NRCS DC discussing Farm Bill Programs and opportunities for participation



## Noble County - Perry Field Service Center

Noble County Conservation District, OSU Extension and NRCS hosted an outreach meeting pertaining to pasture management. There were 47 in attendance. Rusty Peterson lead off with Effects of Prescribed burning on pasture management, Melissa Thompson conducted a soil health demonstration on infiltration, Dr. Angela Post talked about weed control methods and David Buffington CED for FSA talked about the livestock assistance program. The take home question was “is that weed the problem”?

OSU Centennial Celebration, May 3<sup>rd</sup>. Melissa Thompson, Rusty Peterson and Wade Warren greeted participants at the celebration and handed out Soil Health calendars, pollinator brochures and other conservation information. Approximately 160 youth and adults attended.

OSU Centennial  
Celebration



## ZONE 1 REVIEW cont...

### Noble County - Perry Field Service Center

May 30<sup>th</sup> at the Otoe Missouria Intertribal Youth Celebration, Melissa Thompson and Rusty Peterson talked to the youth about why soil is important to them. Approximately 160 youth and adults attended.

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Missouria Intertribal  
Youth Celebration

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### Oklahoma County - Oklahoma City Field Service Center

A group of our newest NRCS employees from across the nation participated in a week long Orientation for New Employees training the week of April 14<sup>th</sup> to 18<sup>th</sup>. The group stayed in Oklahoma City and visited a number of sites during their week here including Eagle Ridge Institute and Shilo Cam. This is a facility that provides young mothers and their children with prevention and treatment programs that address issues such as drug abuse, gang violence, juvenile crime, child abuse, youth leadership and family preservation.

Rick Godfrey, an OCCD Board member, provided a Board members perspective of the partnerships between NRCS and the Conservation Districts and urban facilities such as Eagle Ridge Institute.

Steve Alspach, NRCS State Soil Scientist, provided Soil Health information and demonstrations for the class.

John Mayfield, Director of Eagle Ridge stopped by to visit and welcome the group and explain this unique partnership with the Oklahoma County Conservation District and NRCS.

Don Bartolina took the class to Junior's pond which is named after the retired technician Junior Evans who helped Eagle Ridge with the pond and wetland development, and described the challenges of urban planning and implementation of practices and the partnerships that must be maintained to accomplish these types of practices.



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Orientation for New Employees - Oklahoma City

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## ZONE 2 REVIEW

### Ottawa County - Miami Field Service Center

The Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), the Oklahoma Tribal Conservation Advisory Council (OTCAC) and the Ottawa County Conservation District partnered to hold a conservation workshop and luncheon on May 8, 2014. The workshop was held at the Inter-Tribal Council Complex, in Miami, Oklahoma. Local farmers, ranchers, Tribes, tribal members and women in agriculture received valuable information on, the importance of soil health, best management practices for pasture and rangeland, how to get a good soil test and funding opportunities through USDA Farm Bill programs. Representatives from the USDA NRCS, Farm Service Agency (FSA), Rural Development (RD), Risk Management Agency (RMA), OSU Extension and the Ottawa County Conservation District provided valuable information on their conservation programs and community based funding opportunities. NRCS state soil scientist, Steve Alspach and soil scientist, Jake Boyett provided a soil health demonstration with the NRCS rainfall simulator. Glenna J. Wallace, Chief of the Eastern Shawnee Tribe of Oklahoma provided the opening prayer for the workshop. Members from seven Tribes attended the workshop.



Networking opportunities occurred during lunch



Steve Alspach, State Soil Scientist, provides attendees with an overview on the importance of soil health

### Payne County - Stillwater Field Service Center

#### Tribal Consultation Meeting with the Iowa Nation

The Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) and Rural Development (RD) partnered to hold a tribal consultation meeting with the Iowa Nation. The consultation meeting was held at the Iowa Nation tribal complex in Perkins, Oklahoma. Representing the Iowa Nation were fourteen tribal leaders and directors. Representing NRCS were; State Conservationist, Gary O Neill, State Tribal Liaison, Carol Crouch and RD State Director, Ryan McMullen. USDA representatives provided attendees with valuable information on the 2014 Farm Bill programs and community based funding opportunities. The focus of the meeting was to consult with the Tribe to identify their conservation needs, issues, barriers or concerns; then determine if the USDA agencies could provide assistance. Informational packets were provided from the Farm Service Agency, NRCS and RD.



NRCS State Conservationist, Gary O Neill and Tribal leaders of the Iowa Nation



## ZONE 2 REVIEW cont...

### Tulsa County - Tulsa Field Service Center

The Natural Resources Conservation Service was invited to participate in the American Indian Chamber of Commerce of Oklahoma (AICCO) Tribal Employment Rights Office (TERO) workshop. The workshop was hosted by the Osage Nation on June 19, in Tulsa, Oklahoma. The AICCO has four chapters in Oklahoma that are made up of American Indian owned and TERO certified businesses. Monthly workshops are staggered throughout the month to allow chamber members and other agencies the opportunity to attend and network during working luncheons. This workshop focused on the function, purpose and benefits of being TERO certified. Panelist from the Cherokee Nation, Osage Nation and the Muscogee (Creek) Nation provided an overview of TERO. State Tribal Liaison, Dr. Carol Crouch, represented NRCS at the workshop. Dr. Crouch provided a brief overview of NRCS Farm Bill programs and extended the invitation to AICCO members to attend upcoming NRCS workshops being held on July 15 and August 20.



Left to Right: Dr. Wayne Johnson, Director of employment and training, Muscogee Creek Nation, Jon Overacker, TERO director of Cherokee Nation, Dr. Crouch, NRCS and Chris Samples, President/Owner RedStone Construction, Native owned and TERO certified

## ZONE 3 REVIEW

### Garvin County - Pauls Valley Field Service Center

The 2014 Spring Cattle Tour was held at the ranch of Brent and Sheri Kuehny on May 22, 2014. The Kuehnys run a pre-conditioning yard, as well as run cow-calf and stockers. Brent Kuehny is the man on the right in the picture.



### Cotton County - Walters Field Service Center



Cotton Co CD and Walters NRCS held their annual land judging contest. There was 74 kids that participated in the event from Walters & Temple 4-H and FFA chapters.

## ZONE 3 REVIEW cont...

### Cotton County - Walters Field Service Center

In conjunction with OSU on April 23 the Walters NRCS office and Cotton Co CD participated in the annual Wheat Variety Trials in Cotton Co on Kinder Farms.



Jeff Davis, District Conservationist, presented to the Walters Rotary Club information on Farm Bill related issues. He discussed EQIP, CSP & ACEP with the group of 25 Rotary club members on May 15, 2014. After the presentation there was an open question forum that ranged from No till/Soil Health to Ponds and Water wells/Drought.

### Comanche County - Lawton Field Service Center

The 10th Annual Natural Resources Journey was held April 29, 30 and May 1, 2, 2014 with approximately 1000 students attending the 4 day event. The event was sponsored by the Comanche County Conservation District, Wichita Mountains Wildlife Refuge, and the USDA/NRCS office at Lawton, Ok. Classes included Water Quality, Wildlife Habitat, Soils Class, Reptiles as well as a host of other topics.

### Stephens County - Duncan Field Service Center

Stephens County Conservation District, with help from NRCS held their annual Outdoor Classroom at the Stephens County Fairgrounds in Duncan, Oklahoma on May 14<sup>th</sup>. In attendance were over 300 local 4<sup>th</sup> graders who got to visit 13 different stations. For example, OSU Extension brought over the stream trailer and Nick Plata from the Wichita Mountains Wildlife Refuge informed students of the various animals on the refuge. During lunch, there was a Bird presentation from the Iowa Tribe Eagle House from Perkins, Oklahoma.

## ZONE 4 REVIEW

### Pottawatomie County - Shawnee Field Service Center

The Shawnee Field Office is teaming up with the Gordon Copper Technology Center to bring the first Ag Trade Day to the Shawnee area. The one day event will be held on July 21, 2014 at the Gordon Cooper Technology Center. The Trade Day will focus on non-traditional agriculture practices that are sparking interest in areas such as Shawnee. Topics for the day will include: Micro Dairy Facts and Regulations, Attracting Native Pollinators, Bee Keeping, Gardening (Organic) 101, Managing Pecan Orchards, Agritourism, High Tunnel Houses, and Financial Assistance that is available. Speakers will include staff from the Noble Foundation, the Oklahoma Department of Agriculture, the Xerces Foundation, the Gordon Copper Technology Center, along with area producers. A \$10 registration fee will cover the cost of lunch along with the use of the facilities. For more information, contact Liana Wagner at (405) 273-2076 extension 103.



## ZONE 4 REVIEW cont...

### Bryan County - Durant Field Service Center

The Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), the Oklahoma Tribal Conservation Advisory Council (OTCAC), USDA agencies, the Bryan County Conservation District partnered with the Choctaw Nation to hold a conservation workshop and dinner on Tuesday, June 17, 2014. The workshop was held at the Choctaw Nation Community Center, in Durant Oklahoma with 93 Local farmers, ranchers, Tribes, tribal members and women in agriculture in attendance. Representatives from NRCS, Farm Service Agency (FSA), Rural Development (RD), Risk Management Agency (RMA) and the National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS) provided an overview of programs available to producers. Mr. Sam Smith, representing the Bryan County Conservation District provided an overview of their programs and projects in Bryan County. Mr. Shannon McDaniel, assistant director for Choctaw Agriculture provided an overview of the Choctaw Nation agriculture farms and ranches.

The NRCS has launched a new campaign: Unlock the Secrets in the Soil. As part of that campaign, NRCS state soil scientist, Steve Alspach, delivered a soil health demonstration with a rainfall simulator. This demonstration helped producers have a better understanding of the benefits in implementing certain management systems that enhance soil health. Kevin Dale, CED for the FSA office in Durant, provided an overview of the guidelines for the FSA livestock disaster program. State Director for RD, Ryan McMullen covered RD community funding opportunities and the USDA Promise Zones. NRCS program liaison, Brent Pannell, covered NRCS Farm Bill programs and Josh Dale, with RMA, covered 2014 Farm Bill changes regarding crop insurance.



Rainfall Simulator Demonstration



Brent Pannell, NRCS Program Liaison, presenting NRCS Farm Bill Programs

### Hughes County - Holdenville Field Service Center

The Hughes County Conservation District assisted the Muscogee Creek Nation (MCN) set up its first ever Earth Day Festival at Okmulgee on April 22. Over 130 students attended from Okmulgee, Henryetta and Holdenville schools. HCCD staff was interviewed by both the MCN Native Newspaper and TV program (episode #407).



Andrea Jones, District Secretary for the Hughes County Conservation District, gives a demonstration to area youths

## ZONE 4 REVIEW cont...

### Hughes County - Holdenville Field Service Center

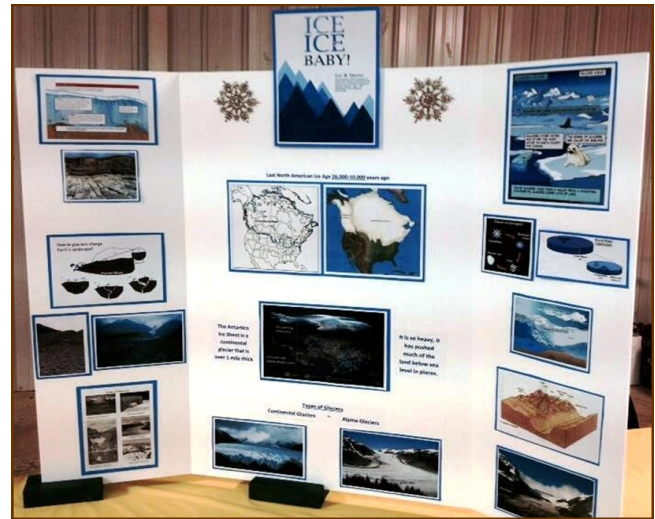
HCCD also assisted the Alabama-Quassarte & Kialegee Tribal towns with advertising for their e-waste and tire recycling events. Over 8,000 pounds of electronic waste and over 200 tires were collected and kept from area landfills which more than doubled what was collected at last year's event.



HCCD staff gave 2 presentations to the Calvin/Stuart 4-H Day Camp on June 4. Native American Stickball was demonstrated and the "Ice, Ice Baby" presentation on how glaciers change the earth's surface was

HCCD gave a presentation to the Holdenville Public Library youth program on the "Incredible Journey" of a water molecule to area youth and parents on June 5.

HCCD is working with MCN Youth Employment Program by using 3 students this summer. Damian Larney, Salvador Brown and Jason Scott have helped clear brush from our watersheds, cleaned the equipment yard, and helped teach 4-H students how to play Native American Stickball.



## Upcoming USDA Farm Bill Workshops

July 15, 2014	Shawnee, OK - Multi-County Farm Bill Workshop Reunion Hall North - CPN PowWow Grounds	Farm Bill Programs Soil Health Trailer	9:00 AM
July 16, 2014	Shawnee, OK - Multi-County Farm Bill Workshop Feral Hogs-Climate Impacts-Drought- APHIP	USDA partners workshop *All producers	9:30 AM
August 5, 2014	Frisco Center - Clinton, Oklahoma Exhibit Hall - 101 S. 4th Street	Farm Bill Programs Soil Health Trailer	5:00 PM
August 7, 2014	OSU Extension Center - Enid, Oklahoma 316 Oxford	Farm Bill Programs Soil Health Trailer	5:00 PM
August 11, 2014	Goodwell, OK- Oklahoma Panhandle State 323 Eagle Ave Classroom #101 Science & Agriculture Bldg.	Farm Bill Programs Soil Health Trailer	5:00 PM
August 12, 2014	Southwest Technology Center - Altus, Oklahoma Seminar Rooms A & B - 711 W Tamarack Road	Farm Bill Programs Soil Health Trailer	5:00 PM